



NEWS RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2008

CONTACT: Jon Hanian
(208) 334-2100

GOVERNOR OTTER HONORS SCIENCE TEACHERS WITH GIANTS AWARD

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter today recognized the exceptional efforts of three Idaho science teachers by presenting them with the 2008 GIANTS Award at a ceremony held at the Discovery Center of Idaho.

Weiser High School teacher Megan Overgaard; Annette Smith of Rocky Mountain Middle School (Idaho Falls); and West Park Elementary School (Moscow) teacher Tammy Sewell were awarded \$2,000 each as recipients of the Governor's Industry Award for Notable Teaching in Science (GIANTS).

"Annette, Megan, and Tammy serve as a model of how educators can work with industry to enhance science and technology education," Governor Otter said. "Teachers have a tremendous responsibility to prepare today's students for tomorrow's workforce. More than ever, we need teachers who can inspire students to lives spent in discovery, learning and achievement. Those teachers who excel deserve our support and recognition."

The GIANTS program was initiated by the Office of the Governor and is sponsored by the Science and Technology Roundtable, a group of industry leaders including the Micron Foundation, Idaho National Laboratory, URS-Washington Division, Hewlett-Packard, and Idaho Power. With support from the Idaho Department of Commerce's Office of Science and Technology, the State Department of Education and Office of the State Board of Education, as well as the Discovery Center of Idaho, GIANTS recognizes teachers for their efforts to link industry and the economic future of Idaho to the classroom through the enhancement of science and technology education.

Honorable Mention awards of \$500 each were presented to three additional teachers: Lane Durtschi of Carey School, Mike Brown with Teton Middle School (Driggs), and Susan Dransfield of Mary McPherson Elementary School (Meridian).

All the participating teachers were nominated by the student council and/or parent groups at their school for making science exciting, challenging, and relevant. A cash prize of \$500 goes to each school/student council that nominated the GIANTS award recipients, with a cash prize of \$100 going to each school/student council that nominated the Honorable Mention award recipients.

The GIANTS partners are firmly committed to the advancement of science and technology education and consider it vital to Idaho's economic future. The Governor and the industry partners congratulate this year's winners and honorable mentions for their significant contributions to education.



NOTE TO EDITORS: Attached is a brief summary for each of the award recipients.

Elementary School GIANTS Awardee:

The 2008 elementary school winner is Tammy Sewell who teaches at West Park Elementary School in Moscow. Tammy has a BS in elementary education and a Masters degree in education administration from the University of Idaho. She obtained National Board Certification as a middle childhood generalist in 1999 and a gifted and talented endorsement in 2006.

Tammy is a member of the National Education Association and the Idaho Gifted and Talented Education Association. She has been a Math Olympiads coach, a Knowledge Bowl coach, and a coordinator for Invention Convention. Tammy has been an adjunct faculty member at U of I and WSU and has served on district curriculum committees for science, math, and technology.

Among the special programs Tammy uses to enhance science instruction are a forensic science unit, Invent America, video production projects, a skyscraper construction challenge, and field trips with the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute to study ecosystems.

Middle School GIANTS Awardee:

The GIANTS Middle School Teacher is Annette Smith of Rocky Mountain Middle School in Idaho Falls. Annette has been a teacher for 21 years, teaching math, life science, and physical science. Annette is a member of the Idaho Science Teachers Association and the National Science Teachers Association. She has been a volleyball coach, Science Olympiad advisor, and the Chemistry merit badge counselor for the Boy Scouts of America.

A bed of nails, speeding cars in the hallways, laser light shows, kinetic ice cream experiences, multiple chemistry reaction, and the singing of the Element Song are just a few of the adventures that take place in Annette Smith's classes.

Annette has a BS from Brigham Young University. She has been on the curriculum development committee for District #93, a presenter at Idaho and Nevada science conventions, and was named the Outstanding Secondary Science Teacher for Region IV in 1995.

High School GIANTS Awardee:

The GIANTS High School Awardee is Megan Overgaard. Megan has been teaching Biology and Anatomy and Physiology at Weiser High School for 10 years, but her dedication to young people extends far beyond the classroom. She has been the science club advisor, head track coach, INL Scholastic Tournament team coach, and a gifted and talented facilitator.

Special programs used in Megan's classroom include deer tagging with Idaho Fish and Game, tree mapping of municipal parks, environmental analysis of water in the Weiser River Basin, and dissection projects with the Weiser Vet Clinic.

Megan holds a BS in secondary education from Boise State University with additional coursework in science and technology curriculum planning, curriculum mapping, and gifted and talented curriculum. She belongs to the Idaho Digital Learning Academy, the National Science Teachers Association, and the Weiser Education Foundation. Megan was the Weiser High school Teacher of the Year in 2005.